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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION GLOBAL TORTURE CHINESE
PRESIDENT HU JINTAO'S MEETING WITH US PRESIDENT BUSH
US IMMIGRATION POLICY NUCLEAR DEAL BETWEEN IRAN AND
RUSSIA WAR IN IRAQ HAITI AND ARGENTINA PRESIDENT
KIRCHNER'S STYLE 04/24/06

11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Key international stories today include Osama bin Laden issuing new threats in an audiotape broadcast on Arab TV accusing average Westerners of supporting "a Zionist, crusaders' war on Islam" and urging his followers to go to Sudan to fight a proposed UN peace force; criticism of the globalization of torture; the implications of the meeting between US President George W. Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao; Chinese President Jintao's statement that he "has no plans to copy Western political paths wholesale;" the US immigration policy; a nuclear deal between Iran and Russia; EU Trade Commissioner Mandelson warning that an Argentine-Uruguayan dispute over pulp mills involving European companies could harm European trade relations with Latin America; the costs of the war in Iraq; Haitian President-elect Rene Preval requesting assistance from President Kirchner in the form of 'a suggested growth-based plan of government;' disagreements between Argentine Economy Minister Felisa Miceli and the IMF at the IMF Spring Meetings as well as Miceli's meeting with US Assistant Secretary Earl Anthony Wayne; and Bolivian President

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Morales getting tough with the US.

12. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "On the globalization of torture"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (04/22) "... Under the pretext of defending superior goods, the most diverse regimes justify the use of abhorrent practices.

"... Human rights declarations and conventions are losing importance since US President George W. Bush announced he would launch a 'war on terror' in 2001..."

"US VP Dick Cheney proclaims the CID formula (cruel, inhuman, and degrading) as an indispensable tool in the fight on terror.

"Vladimir Bukovsky (who spent twelve years in Soviet prisons) replied to Cheney, 'If the VP is right and the CID is a required tool to win the war on

terrorism, then this war is already lost.'"

- "Hu Jintao's visit leaves Bush empty-handed"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," writes (04/229) "During the meeting between US President George W. Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao, the latter obtained almost everything he wanted, while Bush was empty-handed.

"... Jintao managed to consolidate China as a superpower in the international scenario... while he reinforced his leadership at a domestic level. It was a deft public relations maneuver, which was free for him.

"Meanwhile, US President Bush did not get any kind of progress on the two most important issues for him - the US trade deficit with China, and the crisis with the Iranian nuclear program.

"Hu Jintao did not want to commit himself to devaluating the Yuan, which would enable American goods to compete under better terms in the Chinese market. He only spoke of making the exchange rate more flexible.

"On political matters, the Chinese president reiterated his reluctance to the implementation of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which foresees sanctions ranging from the economic ones to the use of military force."

- "Immigration legislation - 'Bush will review whatever comes out of Capitol Hill'"

Jorge Sosa, on special assignment in Washington for business-financial "El Cronista," writes (04/24) "..."

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice avoided using the word veto, but she made clear that the US President 'will review every project or report coming out of Congressional debates based on the criteria he has maintained'..."

According to the USG official, the White House is planning to achieve an 'integral policy' of immigration, which will protect borders while preserving the humanitarian treatment of those who cooperate with our economic development so they can also protect their own families.'"

- "Nuclear deal between Iran and Russia"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" reports (04/24) "Just one week away from the expiration of the time established by the UN for Iran to stop its nuclear plan, Iran announced yesterday that it reached a 'basic deal' with Russia to enrich uranium in Russia while it asserted that it will not stop exporting oil in spite of international sanctions.

"... It was not made clear whether Iran will completely stop enriching uranium in its own territory (which was a demand of the West) or whether the joint operation will complement the current process of uranium enrichment in Iran. Tehran has said that it will never renounce its right to process uranium and manufacture nuclear oil as per the Non Proliferation Treaty."

- "In spite of its deal with Russia, Iran warns that its nuclear plan is 'irreversible'"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" reports (04/24) "Less than

24 hours after a deal between Tehran and Moscow was announced, which was seen as a way out of the crisis unleashed by the Iranian nuclear plan, the government of the Islamic republic clarified that it is not willing to renounce uranium enrichment on an industrial scale in its own territory, and it added that the implementation of the nuclear plan is 'irreversible.'

"Just four days away from the UN deadline for Tehran to stop enriching uranium, the US has all the options on the table in order to put an end to the controversial Iranian nuclear plan - last Tuesday, US President George W. Bush did not dismiss the possibility of attacking Iranian nuclear facilities, while US media have lately reported Washington's several military plans against Tehran."

- "Iraq, the most expensive war in history"

Gustavo Sierra, columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (04/23) "The war in Iraq has been the most expensive war in the history of the US. Some 10 billion dollars are spent per month, twice as much as what was spent in Vietnam. The total cost so far of the three years of war is 282 billion dollars.

"According to two studies carried out by the Center for Strategic Budgetary Assessments and the official Congressional Research Service, the Bush administration will spend this year at least 94 billion dollars, a 50% increase vis--vis 2003.

"... Analysts believe that the only way to stop this 'hemorrhage' of dollars is by immediately withdrawing a good number of the 140,000 US troops stationed in the area. However, Bush has already warned that while the withdrawal will start as of July, the task of abandoning Iraq will be up to his successor, as well as the check."

- "A hand for President Preval"

Left-of-center "Pagina 12" reports (04/24) "Last March 13, Nestor Kirchner received Haitian President-elect René Preval. In the middle of a friendly meeting, the Argentine president asked his guest whether Haiti

expected some special help, 'a hand,' as we say. Preval did not hesitate. He said that he needed 'a plan of government based on growth.' And he added... that he wanted to involve Argentina, Brazil and Chile in his request.

"Kirchner realized Preval's request was not merely rhetoric... Preval said he needed the plan before taking power. President Kirchner asked several government officials from five ministries to put hands to work and have a draft before the Haitian president's swearing-in ceremony, which should be made compatible with the governments of Brazil and Chile.

"Every government should cooperate, although Preval expects Argentina to provide data and expertise on emergency policies aimed at getting out of the crisis, this is, social policies. The criticized "Jefas and Jefes de Hogar" (Household Chiefs Program) and the Remediario program will surely be the stars of the Argentine contribution. The Argentine rebound after the 2001 meltdown... inspired Preval a hypotheses of imitation and perhaps a feeling of identification."

- "Clashes with the IMF could speed up the withdrawal of the IMF office in Buenos Aires"

Jorge Luis Vazquez, columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (04/23) "The prevailing climate during the assembly between the IMF and Argentina could speed up the withdrawal of the IMF office in Buenos Aires.

"At this moment, there is a gradual downsizing at the office. Andrew Wolfe's return to Washington was only the first step..."

"However, now the clashes between IMF officials on the one hand and Nestor Kirchner and Felisa Miceli on the other hand could end up in a formal request from the Argentine Government so that the IMF office is closed.

"For now..., the IMF is handling the timing of its withdrawal given that Argentina only made 'a suggestion' in this regard when it paid its entire debt of 9.5 billion dollars in early 2006."

- "Miceli charged the IMF with 'being part of the problem and not of the solution'"

Jorge Luis Velazquez, on special assignment in Washington for leading "Clarín," writes (04/23) "In her debut at the IMF Assembly, Felisa Miceli reversed the traditional roles assigned to attending countries. This time, she assumed the role of principal analyst of the international economic situation and that of Argentina, and placed the IMF in the defendant's seat.

"In a written presentation at the IMF Financial and Monetary Committee during the first session of the Spring Assembly, Felisa Miceli recriminated the IMF, among other things, because it is only devoted to detecting problems and it only contributed a few solutions; it has a wrong diagnose on world and local inflation; it has not adequately pondered the importance of the salary sector as an element of the economic recovery; it generates information of 'dubious credibility;' and it only defends the interests of the financial creditors of indebted countries."

- "According to the IMF, price controls are not enough"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nación," writes (04/23) "The first meeting between Economy Minister Felisa Miceli with IMF Managing Director Rodrigo de Rato was better than expected.

"Rato said 'You should take the opportunity. You have a great local growth and a good international context.' 'This is the moment to promote some reforms to reduce the vulnerability of the country when the current world cycle changes.'

"... Rato was firm on one point - price controls are 'insufficient' to eliminate inflation. He said that more than that is required.

"... Anoop Singh, IMF director for Latin America, said that the Government should promote a 'set of macroeconomic measures' going beyond price controls in order to put the inflation under control in the medium term."

- "Meeting between Argentine Economy Minister Felisa Miceli and A/S Earl A. Wayne"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nación," writes (04/23) "During a

45-minute meeting at the Watergate complex in this city, Economy Minister Felisa Miceli and US Assistant Secretary Earl Anthony Wayne reviewed the bilateral

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economic and commercial agenda.

"According to members of the Argentine delegation, Miceli explained the central points of the Argentine Government's economic policy while A/S Wayne offered his cooperation."

- "Argentine debt with the World Bank will be lowered"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (04/24) "Five months after having announced the cancellation of its entire debt owed to the IMF, the Argentine Government fixed a similar goal - it will reduce its credit exposure with the World Bank (6.8 billion dollars⁹ by 30%.

"Argentine Economy Minister Felisa Miceli's strategy is prioritizing the country's relationship with the IDB, from which she will request new infrastructure loans."

- "Kirchner, the Peronist Party and Uruguay"

Leading "Clarín's" political columnist comments (04/23) "... The (Argentine) Government suspects its strategy in the conflict over the pulp mills may have started to create doubts among the financiers of the undertaking. Miceli left a folder with background information with the head of the World Bank, Paul Wolfowitz. There is a climate of success. However, this could be a mistake - Argentina's and Uruguay's failure to solve the problem could not only frustrate this investment but scare away future economic bets in the region as well.

"... A high-ranking EU government official made this warning. Finland suspended the visit of its Trade minister. International mistrust seems to broaden. US Treasury Secretary mixed praising statements for the country's growth and clear omissions about holdout bondholders through a statement he made to Miceli on the lack of a positive business climate. The reproach is not related to the potent status of the economy but on certain legislation and a political style."

- "Evo Morales gets tough with the US"

Leading "Clarín" reports (04/22) "In a new chapter of a saga of clashes between the US and Bolivia, Bolivian President Evo Morales lashed out at the US for having denied the visa to a Bolivian vice minister, and he threatened to adopt similar measures against US citizens. It is the second time in a few weeks in which a government official is denied a visa."

- "Chavez takes Cuban foreign minister to the Asuncion meeting"

Sergio Moreno, columnist of left-of-center "Página 12," writes (04/22) "... During a meeting among the presidents of Uruguay, Bolivia, Venezuela and Paraguay, Tabaré Vázquez asked that a hypothetical gas pipeline, which is being projected among Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay, should not go through Argentina

in fear that Argentina cut gas supply in retaliation for the pulp mills issue.

"The US Department of State focused its attention and

concern on the meeting because Chavez arrived accompanied by Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque, who was visiting Caracas...

".... The US has not stopped wielding pressure to prevent Venezuela from entering the UN Security Council. Argentina is being pressured because it has decided to vote in favor of Venezuela's entry as a temporary member."

13. EDITORIALS

- "The US, China and global balance"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (04/24) "The summit between Presidents George W. Bush and Hu Jintao in Washington is a most important event for world politics not only for the importance of the two countries but also because their bilateral relationship has a decisive influence on international stability, security and peace.

".... The two countries are facing an increasing transnationalization of their main corporations, which means that the larger their cooperation the greater predictability global economy will have.

"Finally, in an international scenario crowded with signs of alert and conflict..., China could play a moderating role and avoid mismatches, which jeopardize the world."

- "Again, the IMF"

An editorial in conservative "La Prensa" reads (04/23) "That one who believed that after canceling its entire debt with the IMF, Argentina was going to rid of the IMF was wrong. Rodrigo Rato, IMF head, said that Argentina will be an example of what should not happen in other nations... and that inflation will only be controlled through a fiscal and monetary adjustment..."

"Nine out of ten economists agree that the Central Bank is not doing everything it can to fight inflation. Just growth is not enough... All ideas should, therefore, be welcomed."

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GUTIERREZ